

Sakurai teaches a *curable composition* based on a maleimide derivative represented by a specific formula. See the Abstract of Sakurai. This is very different from the invention as recited in claims 1 and 11 of the present application.

A. Claims 1-10

Sakurai does not teach or suggest a maleimide group containing crosslinked polymer particle at all, much less one in which the maleimide groups is bonded to the particle via an ethylene oxide linking group as recited in claim 1.

Sakurai teaches a curable composition comprising a maleimide derivative represented by formula (1). See columns 3-4 for a representation of formula (1) and its substituents. As acknowledged by the Examiner during the January 11, 2004 interview, Sakurai does not anywhere teach or suggest a maleimide group containing crosslinked polymer particle. Nothing in formula (1) of Sakurai represents a crosslinked polymer particle.

Further, even if the Patent Office alleges that upon curing the composition of Sakurai could form a crosslinked polymer particle (which crosslinked structure is not taught in Sakurai), such would still not achieve claim 1. As discussed during the January 11 interview, an ethylene oxide or polyethylene oxide linking chain is required in formula (1) in claim 1, and use of such a linking chain to link the maleimide group to a crosslinked particle is not taught or suggested by Sakurai.

No groups in formula (1) of Sakurai teach or disclose an ethylene oxide or polyethylene oxide change. R_{11} and R_{12} represent a linking group selected from the group consisting of (1) an alkylene group, (2) an alicyclic group, (3) an arylalkylene group, and (4) a cycloalkylene group. See column 3, lines 62-65 of Sakurai. None of these groups are an ethylene oxide or polyethylene oxide chain.

However, even if R_{11} and R_{12} were selected to be an alkylene chain, the ethylene oxide or polyethylene oxide linking chain as recited in claim 1 would not be achieved. R_{11}

and R_{12} are connected to G_1 and G_2 , respectively, which are described to be —COO— or —OCO— . Thus, the linking groups of Sakurai would have to include —COO— or —OCO— . See column 3, lines 66-67 of Sakurai. Therefore, R_{11} and R_{12} bonded with G_1 and G_2 would not have produced an ethylene oxide or polyethylene oxide linking chain.

R_2 as taught by Sakurai is not a linking chain like the linking chain recited in claim 1. Sakurai teaches that R_2 links two maleimide groups. R_2 does not link a maleimide group with a crosslinked polymer particles as required in claim 1.

Further, as discussed in the January 11 interview, R_2 of Sakurai is not a linking chain as in present claim 1, much less an ethylene oxide or polyethylene oxide linking chain.

R_2 in Sakurai is an ether or polyether chain or an ester or polyester chain. See column 4, lines 1-4 of Sakurai. Sakurai does not teach or suggest that R_2 could possibly be ethylene oxide or polyethylene oxide. Sakurai only teaches that R_2 may include ethylene oxide as a modifier of R_2 . See, for example, column 6, lines 11-21 and column 7, lines 23-27 of Sakurai. However, a modified ether or ester compound is not the ethylene oxide linking chain as recited in claim 1.

Furthermore, even if one of ordinary skill in the art were to cure the composition taught by Sakurai, the particle as recited in claim 1 would not have been achieved.

Therefore, Applicants submit that Sakurai does not teach or suggest the invention recited in claim 1. In particular, Sakurai does not teach or suggest a crosslinked polymer particle comprising an ethylene oxide chain to link a maleimide group to the particle.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 1-10 are allowable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

B. Claims 11-16

Sakurai does not teach or suggest the method of producing a maleimide group-containing crosslinked polymer particle. As explained above and acknowledged by the

Examiner during the January 11 interview, here again Sakurai does not teach or suggest a crosslinked polymer particle at all, but instead teaches a curable composition comprising a maleimide derivative therein.

Further, the method for making the crosslinked polymer particle as recited in claim 11 is not taught or suggested by Sakurai. In particular, Sakurai does not teach or suggest reacting hydroxymethylmaleimide with a hydroxyl group containing polymer particle into which a hydroxyl group has been introduced by ethylene glycol or polyethylene glycol as recited in claims 11.

The hydroxyl group containing polymer particle is formed by treating a crosslinked polymer particle with an ethylene glycol or polyethylene glycol. See, e.g., page 12, lines 11-19 of the specification.

The hydroxyl group containing polymer particle is then reacted with hydroxymethylmaleimide to produce the maleimide group containing crosslinked polymer particle. See page 17 of the specification.

Applicants submit that Sakurai does not teach or suggest any of the process steps recited in claim 11. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 11-16 are allowable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-16 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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